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### **This I Believe**

Have you ever had a friend who laughs at everything and anything? I guess that could be me. My friends have commented on several occasions that my overzealous laughter gets on their nerves, but they have long accepted that it is something they cannot change. Laughter is the way I deal with life. Finding humour, even in the most insignificant things, somehow diminishes and euphemizes the stress or anxiety I encounter. Laughter is the sun that has the power to drive winter from my face. This, I believe.

Laughter is an instant vacation. I would liken it to a vacuum machine: just switch it on and voila, the dirt and dust are sucked away. The same could be said for laughter. Ailments of the soul can be sucked away by a short burst of laughter. School may sometimes be depressing and weary, and many of my friends resort to caffeine or sugar rushes to stay awake in class. I, however, simply rely on laughter and humour to get me through the day. Sometimes, in the morning, my eyes just refuse to stay open. But after seeing my father stumble head-on into a wall, a giggle starts to build up inside of me, leaving me feeling more 'alive' and ready for whatever that may come my way.

I believe that laughter is contagious. More often than not I find myself laughing at my friend for laughing, even though I have no idea why she was laughing in the first place. Then, my friend will start to laugh at me for laughing at her too, and this cycle goes on till one of us gets too exhausted to carry on. Laughter could be likened to the flu, minus the runny nose. People catch it and there is no vaccine for it. I feel that laughter cannot be totally evicted out of the system. It is an integral part of our lives; without laughter, we could be likened to be missing a limb.

I feel that laughter brings people together. When we laugh at the same joke, we share an intimate, albeit brief, moment of togetherness. What we laugh at is not of the greatest concern; it is what we are doing together that should be our focus. Laughter can start a chain reaction that eases tension and stress. It also reminds us of what we have in common, rather than what we do not.

There can never be enough said of the virtues, dangers and the power of a shared laugh. I believe in the power of laughter. It is a powerful thing, and it has improved my outlook on life. Live and laugh. It won't hurt.